CHAPTER I

THE JESUITS

In the history of the Catholic Church, the emergence of great religious orders, their special position and the nature of their function within the Church play a vital role. The Benedictine, the Augustinian, the Dominican and the Franciscan orders have an important place in the European history. These orders take their names from their founders, and the monks themselves are called Benedictines or Augustinians or Dominicans or Franciscans. But the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuit Order, does not conform to this custom. But if we are to judge by the training given to the Jesuits, there would be every justification for calling them Ignatians. But Ignatius totally stressed on calling his Order the Society of Jesus to indicate that Jesus was the only model for all its future members.

The Society of Jesus

The Society of Jesus is a male religious order approved by the Roman Catholic Church. The members are called Jesuits, and are also known as ‘God’s Army’ and as ‘The Company,’ because of the founder Ignatius of Loyola’s military background and a perception of its members’ willingness to go anywhere in the world and live in extreme conditions. The Society is engaged in various missionary works in more than 100 nations in six continents. Apart from the traditional work of teachers and preachers, there are Jesuits working as astronomers, architects, doctors, social activists, journalists, scientists, and so on.

Ignatius of Loyola

Ignatius of Loyola (1491 -1556), a Spanish aristocrat and soldier tried to defend the citadel of Pomplona against the French attack. During the battle a cannon ball struck him, wounded one leg and broke the other. Admiring his courage, the French soldiers reached him back to recuperate at his home, rather than to prison. During his long recovery, he was extremely bored and so he asked for some books
as he was fond of reading “worldly books of fiction and knight errantry.”

But Ignatius was thrilled by reading the books entitled, *Vita Christi* (The Life of Christ) and *Flos Santorum* (Lives of the Saints) given to him. A lively desire to imitate the virtues of Christ, as the saints had done, began to take root in his heart.

Ignatius was gripped by the heroism of the saints very strongly. “He would stop to think, reasoning with himself: How would it be if I should do this that St. Francis did and this that was done by St. Dominic? And thus he would go over things which he found good, always proposing to himself difficult and arduous things, and when he set them forth he seemed to find within himself strength to carry them out.”

**Founding of the Society of Jesus**

The conversion of Ignatius was not a sudden emotional change but it was a slow intellectual process, in which the force of certain simple truths grew upon his mind till they assumed an all-compelling clarity and an inexorable logic governed all his mental processes. Therefore, his devoted focus was to serve God and save souls. With that motive he ventured founding the Society of Jesus with his band of six companions who at Montmartre in Paris on August 15, 1534, bound themselves by vows of poverty, chastity, and apostolic labours in the Holy Land or, if this latter plan did not prove feasible, as it did not, to any apostolic endeavour enjoined by the Pope. Later in 1536, three more joined the group and these ten made up the first members of the society. The Society is not a sect nor even a theological school, but simply a body of men living under vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, which has its recognized place in the organization of the Roman Catholic Church.

Ignatius laid out his original vision for the new order in the Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus. The Formula of the Institute is the Charter whose approval by Pope Paul III in 1540 marked the birth of the Society of Jesus as a religious order in the Catholic Church; a revised text was confirmed by Pope Julius III in 1550 and is regarded in the present ecclesiastical law as our fundamental rule. It is a concise statement by the first Jesuits of the basic features of our way of life.
and it provides for further elaboration by the drafting constitutions. The formula deals with the nature, spirituality, community life and apostolate of the new religious order. Its famous opening statement echoed Ignatius' military background:

“Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the Cross in our Society, which we desire to be designated by the Name of Jesus, and to serve the Lord alone and the Church, his spouse, under the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth, should, after a solemn vow of perpetual chastity, poverty and obedience, keep what follows in mind. He is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, by means of public preaching, lectures and any other ministration whatsoever of the Word of God, and further by means of retreats, the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity, and the spiritual consolation of Christ's faithful through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments. Moreover, he should show himself ready to reconcile the estranged, compassionately assist and serve those who are in prisons or hospitals, and indeed, to perform any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good.”

Administration of the Society of Jesus

In parallel line with the formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus, in the administrative sector, the supreme authority is the Pope. Therefore, the one who wishes to enter the Society has to pronounce a special vow of obedience to the Pope besides the usual three vows. A Superior General is at the head of the centralized government of the total Society. He is selected for life by a General Congregation, which also has power, never exercised to date, to remove him for serious causes. His residence, together with that of the Curia, is in Rome. The first Superior General was Ignatius.

For administrative purposes, the Order is divided into provinces, with a Provincial at the head of each province. Groups of provinces in turn are formed into assistancies. The assistancy is represented by an assistant chosen normally by a General Congregation, who remains with the Superior General and serves him in an advisory capacity.
The Persons who compose the Society of Jesus

The Society of Jesus, in which all members, each according to his mode of his vocation, participate in the same vocation and mission, understood in their broadest as well as their most precise senses, consists of the members:

i) *Novices* (whether received as lay brothers for the domestic and temporal services of the order, or as aspirants to the priesthood), who are trained in the spirit and discipline of the order, prior to making the religious vows.

ii) At the end of two years the novices make simple vows, and, if aspirants to the priesthood, become *formed scholastics*; they remain in this grade as a rule from two to fifteen years, in which time they will have completed all their studies, pass (generally) a certain period in teaching, receive the priesthood, and go through a third year of novitiate or probation (the tertianship). According to the degree of discipline and virtue, and to the talents they display (the latter are normally tested by the examination for the Degree of Doctor of Theology) they may now become formed coadjutors or professed members of the order.

iii) *Spiritual coadjutors*, whether formed lay brothers or priests, make vows which, though not solemn, are perpetual on their part; while the Society, on its side binds itself to them, unless they should commit some grave offense.

iv) The *professed* are all priests, who make, besides the three usual solemn vows of religion, a fourth, of special obedience to the pope in the matter of missions, undertaking to go wherever they are sent, without even requiring money for the journey. They also make certain additional, but non-essential, simple vows, in the matter of poverty, and the refusal of external honours. The professed of the four vows constitute the kernel of the Society; the other grades are regarded as preparatory, or as subsidiary to this. The chief offices can be held by the professed alone; and though they may be dismissed, they must be received back, if willing
to comply with the conditions that may be prescribed. Otherwise they enjoy no privileges, and many posts of importance, such as the government of colleges, may be held by members of other grades. For special reasons some are occasionally *professed* of three vows and they have certain but not all the privileges of the other *professed*.13

All live in community alike, as regards food, apparel, lodging, recreation, and all are equally bound by the rules of the Society.

**Specific features of the Society of Jesus**

There are some specific features of the Society and they include absolute centralization of authority, life tenure of the head of the order, probation lasting several years prior to the final vows, prohibition against preferments in the Church, gradation of members, private recitation of the Divine Office, absence of regular penances or fasts obligatory on all, absence of distinctive religious dress code, but modelled on that of the local clergy in each region, absence of a female branch, absence of a Third Order, openness to take up any ministry anywhere and a stress on complete obedience which is religious and not military.

**The Mission of the Society of Jesus**

In its constitutions, the Jesuit order is designated as a missionary society. The Jesuit vocation requires a willingness to travel to any place and live in any part of the world where there is hope for working for the betterment of the human society. The idea of mission was already in the mind of Ignatius and so with his first companions he desired to go to the holy land and serve the pilgrims in the spirit of Jesus. After founding the order, Ignatius dispatched his highly capable disciple, Francis Xavier, with three companions to the East. By the time Ignatius died, his followers were already in the missions of Asia, Africa and other countries.

The mission of the Society is expressed in a variety of ways, namely, through the interrelated dimensions of the witness of one’s life, of preaching, conversion, inculturation and of the establishment of local communities, and also
through dialogue and the promotion of Justice desired by God.\textsuperscript{14} In this mission, the emphasis is given on the promotion of Faith and Justice the preaching of the word of God based on inculturation and dialogue with other religious traditions.

Living in solidarity with the poor and outcast, a dialogue born of mutual respect for the cultural and spiritual values, a shared commitment to action for human development and liberation, a genuine desire to heal the world which has been divided by economic and social status, race and ethnicity, violence and war, cultural and religious pluralism, a closer collaboration with the men and women who strive to make the world fit for universal brotherhood, fostering cooperation and coordination throughout the whole society to understand the international dimensions of the major problems, protection of the human rights, safeguarding the life and culture of the indigenous people, solidarity with women which includes equality of men and women, supporting them against exploitation and violence, promoting their education and eliminating discrimination and the usage of inclusive language in speaking and writing are some of the main priorities in the mission ventures of the Jesuits.\textsuperscript{15}

In virtue of the fourth vow of special obedience to the Pope, the Jesuits offer themselves expressing their readiness to go anywhere, at any time and in any situation to fulfil the mission of the Church. In this regard, the recent Popes have entrusted the Jesuits to confront with all the forces of atheism, to take care of the education of the youth, formation of the clergy, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, authentic inculturation, promotion of justice connected with peace and aspirations of all peoples and bringing the nonbelievers to the authentic awareness of God.\textsuperscript{16} Thus the Jesuits are trained to take up any type of mission in any part of the world and so they are always on the move to venture in any missionary task as per the need of the hour.

Jesuits were not the first religious to distinguish themselves as teachers, but theirs were the first constitutions to enjoin general educational work as a regular task. Another innovation of Ignatius was the extension of ministries, excluding secular businesses and political involvements, to embrace all types of apostolic
endeavours in all parts of the world, as long as they tend to the greater glory of God. The order’s motto is A.M.D.G. (Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam).17

Founding (A.D. 1540) to Suppression (A.D. 1773) of the Society of Jesus

The Society of Jesus grew rapidly and by 1615 it had 37 provinces with total membership about 16,000. The founding in 1547-48 of its first school for lay students inaugurated education as a main focus of its work in secondary schools and universities according to the principles laid down in Ratio studiorum (Plan of Studies) (1599). These schools increasingly required teachers who were experts in fields beyond philosophy and theology, the disciplines customary for priests, which led to Jesuits’ becoming engaged in teaching and scholarship in almost every field of Western intellectual life.18

The Jesuits also served as royal confessors in the major courts of Europe, a role that often led to political involvement of the Church in the State and vice versa. Pastoral care was a major concern, especially in giving the Spiritual Exercises, in encouraging the sacrament of reconciliation and regular reception of the Eucharist, in personal spiritual direction, and in the Marian congregations, which were started around 1565 for both clergy and laity. With the aim of providing instruction and formation for Christian life, the Jesuits19 wrote catechisms which became widespread and popular.

The Society played its major role in the Counter-Reformation. In addition to strengthening the Roman Catholicism of the Council of Trent, where several Jesuits took prominent parts as theological advisers, it also entered vigorously into theological controversies and pastoral initiatives, which the Protestant churches quite understandably regarded as adversarial. With these activities and their engagement in schools and universities, the Jesuits helped to shape the spirit of the post-Tridentine Roman Catholic Church.20

Jesuit missionary work started by Francis Xavier in the 1540s, spread to Japan, China, and Latin America in the 17th century. In the age of Spanish and Portuguese conquest, Jesuits went as missionaries and opened overseas territories
based on the principles of accommodation and inculturation. In Latin America, they brought social and cultural development, as well as conversion, by means of reductions (i.e., Indian settlements) under missionary leadership. Form around 1600, controversy and persecution followed initial success in Japan. The Jesuits’ acceptance of Chinese religious customs and their regard for Chinese culture involved them in the Rites Controversy\textsuperscript{21} of the late 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries and this affected the missionary work in China and in India to a large extent.

The Roman College, founded by Ignatius in 1551 and later known as the Gregorian University became a major centre of academic work, especially in philosophy and theology. In these disciplines the Jesuits largely adhered to Thomistic Scholasticism. The Jesuits also staffed several of the national colleges in Rome, among them the German and the English colleges, with the aim of training a cadre of learned and devout priests of their native lands. From the middle of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, the Society also came into conflict with Jansenism.\textsuperscript{22} In the debates concerning the capacity or incapacity to perform good works with or without grace and in conflicts concerning the quality of the contrition preceding the sacrament of penance, they took a less rigorous view than the Jansenists. “The Jansenist and Rites controversies, the Jesuits’ single-minded obedience to the Pope, their various political entanglements, and the international character of the Society aroused resentment against the Order at the time of the Enlightenment. A tendentious interpretation of the principle that the end justifies the means and a view of tyrannized as legitimate were attacked as Jesuitical.”\textsuperscript{23}

From the middle of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, enlightened governments expelled the Jesuits from many European countries and their colonies. Portugal did so in 1759, France in 1764, Spain in 1767, Naples and Sicily in 1767 and 1768, and Parma in 1768. Under intense pressure from those governments, Pope Clement XIV (1769-74) finally felt compelled to disband the order, as he said, “for the peace of the church,” doing so in 1773 in his papal brief \textit{Dominus ac Redemptornoster}.\textsuperscript{24} Frederick II (1740-86) in Prussia and Catherine II (1762-96) in White Russia, opposed the measure. They refused to promulgate the brief in their
territories, which allowed the Jesuits to survive regionally, at first with tacit, and then with explicit, papal permission.25

**Restoration (A.D. 1814) to A.D. 1995**26

Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) restored the Jesuits universally on 7 August 1814, in his bull *Sollicitudinum omnium ecclesiarum* (The Care of all Churches). The society soon made up for its reverses, although various edicts and persecutions continued to limit its work in some countries. From the restoration until almost the middle of the 20th century, the Society of Jesus was much more conservative in thought and activity than it had been before it was suppressed. In the time immediately before and after World War II, however, Jesuits increasingly enlarged the boundaries of their research, speculation, and activities. In the latter half of the 20th century, several Jesuit scholars excelled in different branches of studies.27 The Society of Jesus was greatly influenced by the Second Vatican Council, at which many of its members played significant roles as expert theological advisers.28

John Baptist Janssens, during the tenure as the Jesuit Superior General (1946 – 1964), encouraged the Jesuits to keep pace with the changes that industry, science, technology, and war had brought about in human society. Janssens left his mark by his own concern for the social apostolate and the missions. As far the goals of the social apostolate, the activities of Bl. Alberto Hurtado Cruchaga (1901 – 1952) in Santiago, Chile, in caring for the homeless, and the work of Jerome D’Souza (1897 – 1977), a Jesuit from India, in establishing Indian Social Institute (ISI) in 1951 in his native land at Janssens’s suggestion, stand as good models.29

In his letter on Jesuit Foreign Missions and Missionary zeal to all Major Superiors, dated, 15th September 1959, John Baptist Janssens stresses: “Our Order was founded to spread and serve the Church all over the world, ‘in any part of the world’ as the rule has it. The 30th General Congregation of the Society once again scaled our attention to this ‘substantial point’ of our Institute: ‘All should develop in themselves a cosmopolitan or an international outlook so as to be in flawless accord with the mind of the Catholic Church and world-wideness of our vocation’;
Provincials must consider the general needs of the Society and, whenever they judge that certain of their subjects would be particularly useful, by reason of special talents or a call of God’s grace, for the service of the souls in some other Province, they must have the right-ordered charity to be ready to sacrifice them, if the transfer is found advisable. Thus J.B. Janssens emphasized on Jesuit foreign missions and the missionary zeal in a strong way.

Pedro Arrupe (1907 – 1991) succeeded Janssens in 1965 and as Superior General, endeavoured to reshape the Society of Jesus in accordance with the documents of the Second Vatican Council. This was done by holding the session of the 31st General Congregation in 1966. He also convened the 32nd General Congregation in 1974 – 1975, focusing on the renewal and reformation of the Society of Jesus based on the service of faith and promotion of justice. Father Arrupe brought the Society of Jesus to a painful reappraisal of itself and espoused the Church’s teaching at Medellin, Columbia in 1968, with its stress on the preferential option for the poor. As the numbers of departure of Jesuits from the Society increased and vocations declined, discontent with the Superior General grew. A group of Spanish Jesuits petitioned Pope Paul VI to remove them from Arrupe’s authority. The very conservative views of those Jesuits and the Basque identity of the Jesuit Superior General, who was perhaps even a nationalist spirit, in a country where Spanish far outnumber the Basques in the society, helped fuel their request.

The 32nd General Congregation in its Decree on Inculturation entrusted Father General Arrupe with the task of “further development and promotion of this work throughout the Society” (Decree. 5, n. 2). He exhorts on Inculturation as an important missionary venture to the whole society in his letter of May 1978 to the whole society thus: In line with the desire of the 32nd General Congregation that we “continue with even greater intensity today “the work of inculturation, I would like that a persevering effort in this area become the object of “ever growing concern on the part of the Society” (Decree 5, n. 1). I want us to be vitally aware of the capital importance of inculturation for our mission of defense and propagation of the faith,
conscious that we belong at one and the same time to the local church and to the Universal Church.  

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, a native of Holland, was elected by the Jesuits as the successor of Arrupe on 13th September 1983. His tenure has been marked by improvement in relation with the Pope, by the opening up of the dialogue with the religions of the non-Christian world, and by the strengthening of the Society of Jesus in Eastern Europe after the fall of the communism. The tragic murder by the military in El Salvador of six Jesuits and their two helpers on 16th November 1989 strengthened the mission perspective of the Jesuits in his tenure. The 34th General Congregation of 1995 paved the way for the updating of the Jesuit Order in accord with the new code of Canon Law published in 1983, among its decisions was a positive stand on the rights of women.

**Activities of the Jesuits**

Several pontifical institutes in Rome are under Jesuit direction: the Gregorian University, the Biblical Institute, the Oriental Institute (Orthodox Church), the Vatican Observatory and Vatican Radio. The society also continues to staff national colleges in Rome and residences for seminarians who are attending ecclesiastical universities. The Jesuits are committed to some international works, such as, The Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), The Apostleship of Prayer (AP) and The Christian Life Community (CLC). Presently the Jesuit activities range from education to parish ministry, from research institutes to spiritual centres, from programmes of the fine and performing arts to agricultural stations, from justice advocacy to publishing houses. Jesuits publish more than 1,000 periodicals in 50 languages.

Apart from the wide-spread educational work in many countries, Jesuits have dedicated for education in African and Asian countries, with the most concerted effort being made in India. The promotion of justice and commitment to the marginalized in India involves their assistance to the Dalits. As in the Third World developing countries, so in Latin America the society is enormously engaged both in educational work and in social development projects. Today the Jesuits are one of
the largest single religious orders of priests and brothers in the Catholic Church. They are found in 83 Provinces, 6 independent Regions and 10 dependent Regions in 10 Assistancies. As on 1st January 2013, the total number of Jesuits was 17287: 12,298 Priests, 1,400 Brothers, 2,878 Scholastics and 711 Novices. Through their multi missionary ventures, they form men and women for others and for the greater glory of God.

Jesuits in India

A Jesuit is one who is sent as an apostle, a worker or labourer in the vineyard who must go to the field allotted to him. He should be ready to go wherever the Pope or a Superior of the Society sends him as per the import of the vow of Montmarte, institutionalised in the fourth vow of obedience to the Pope in regard to the missions which the professed of the Society take. Understanding the mission orientation of the founder Ignatius, Francis Xavier was ready to venture and find adventure in his missionary life.

Francis Xavier (1506 – 1552)

Francis Xavier was a very significant missionary of the infant Society. On many occasions he was influenced by dreams. Once he shared a dream with his companion: “Jesus, how exhausted I am! Do you know what? I dreamed that I was carrying an Indian on my shoulders, and he weighed so much that I could not bear him.” Francis manifested his great desire of going to India. The Indian mission of the Jesuits lies at the very origin of their Order. It is to India that Ignatius of Loyola sent his greatest son, Francis Xavier, and to him and his collaborators, that he gave that inspiration and those directives, which became the basis of the Jesuit mission and method. India has also has been the birthplace of missionary theories and the testing ground of missionary policies.

Francis Xavier was the first Jesuit to set foot on Indian soil on 6 May 1542. That day he entered Goa with the new governor, Martin Affonso de Sousa, with whom he sailed from Lisbon. They were given a rousing welcome, and the natural beauty of the Mandovi riverside, together with the imposing buildings could not but
move Xavier. Four months after his arrival, writing to his companions, he declared Goa to be “a completely a Christian city that is something to behold. It has a monastery with many friars of the order of St. Francis, an ornate cathedral with many canons, and many other churches. God our Lord must be greatly thanked for the fact that the name of Christ is flourishing in distant lands and among so many infidels.”

As per his mission project, Francis Xavier was keen on helping the Portuguese, instructing the new converts and work for the conversion of the infidels. He plunged himself into charitable and pastoral work, of which there was no dearth in a city whose beautiful exterior covered many evils, material and spiritual. Francis’ zeal was not satisfied with his care for the sick, the imprisoned and the lepers. Others also needed help. And there were two cancerous evils in Goa which had to combat in particular, religious ignorance and moral laxity. He took charge of the College of St. Paul in Goa, started by a group of Portuguese in 1541. This College was the first educational institution in India which became later the cornerstone of widespread Jesuit mission in education and in other fields.

**Francis’ Mission in India**

When Pope Paul III approved the Society of Jesus in 1540, King John III of Portugal asked the Pope to send two Jesuits to go to India. Francis set out with an Italian priest and a seminarian. After a tedious and sickening voyage for thirteen months, he reached Goa from Lisbon in 1542. Arriving in Goa, Francis found the Portuguese Catholics notoriously cruel to slaves, living in concubinage and neglectful of the poor. He tried to fight this by dedicating himself to helping the poor and sick and zealously encouraging people to lead a good life. But he found the behaviour of the Portuguese officials and traders unbearable. He was earnestly ready even to die in order to defend his faith and to eradicate the sinful atmosphere in Goa.

In 1542, as per the request of the Portuguese Governor of Goa, Francis taught the Tamil speaking fisher folk of Cape Comorin at the southernmost tip of Indian peninsula. They were in need of formal catechetical instructions on their new
faith because no priest was familiar with their language. Arriving in South India, Francis was the only European in this world scorching heat. He learnt Tamil and managed to translate the Creed. Though he experienced the loneliness of working in an alien culture, he went ahead preaching the Gospel with great enthusiasm. He was so accepted by the people that many young fishermen followed him to be trained for Christian ministry. After spending seven years on the coast of South India, constantly moving up and down, preaching, teaching, consoling, comforting, begging for poor, visiting the sick, Francis moved on to Ceylon, the Malaya Peninsula and the Molucca islands, from time to time to visit his headquarters in Goa. Francis Xavier was always a missionary on the move and he undertook continuous missionary journeys to Fishery Coast, Travancore, Mannar, Mylapore, Malacca and Japan. In April 1552, he set sail to China via Malacca from Goa, never to return alive. Wherever he went, he plunged into charitable and pastoral work preaching the message of God’s love for the people. He worked in India for 10 years, 1542 to 1552, known as Xaverian decade. At the time of his death, there were 64 Jesuits in India. But today India has the highest number of Jesuits in the world.

Robert De Nobili (1577 – 1656)46, an Italian Jesuit who came to Madurai Mission, India in 1605, mastered Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit and well versed in Hindu Scriptures. His stress was on indigenization and adaptation. His adaptation had not left a stone unturned in all areas of his life be it personal, social, cultural, intellectual, literary or religious. It had penetrated into the place of worship. He had built a church in Indian style. The liturgical ceremonies were inculturated. But his adaptation became controversial among the Catholics.

There are some other eminent foreign Jesuits in the 16th and 17th centuries. They were: Alejandro Valignano (1539 – 1606), Thomas Stephens (1689 – 1732), Matteo Ricci (1552 – 1610), Alexander de Rhodes (1593 – 1660) and Constanzo Beschi (1680 – 1747), champions of Asian cultures. They became experts in Sanskrit, Tamil, Konkani, Chinese, Tibetan, Vietnamese and other Asian languages. All initiated a policy of dialogue as they understood at that time.47
Eminent Jesuits in India

The Jesuits started the first printing press in India in 1556. Antonio de Monserratte (1556 -1600) was the first person after Ptolemy, to make a map of India. Joseph Tieffenthaller (1710- 1785) was the first geographer to draw up the map of the Ganges. His astronomical and geographical observations are praise worthy. The Jaipur Astronomical Library still speaks of his glory. Fr. Richard at Pondicherry used a telescope for the first time on Indian soil in 1689. He discovered the binary nature of the star AlphaCentauri. Fr. Manuel de Fiueredo, emissary of Maharaja Sawai Sai Singh of Jaipur to the king of Portugal, was largely responsible for the Jaipur and Delhi Observatories. Fr. Jerome D’Souza of Madras was a member of the Indian Constituent Assembly and four times India’s delegate to United Nations General Assembly.

Frs. Ethelbert, Blatter and Henry Santapau were well known for their contribution to Indian Botany. Fr.Santapau became the first chief of the botanical Survey of India. He was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India and the Birbal Sahani Medal by the Indian Botanical Society in 1964 for his services to Indian Botany. Fr. CamilleBulke, a Belgian, India’s most famous Hindi scholar, enriched the Hindi and Sanskrit languages by his writings. He was an outstanding authority on the Ramayana of Valmiki, an eminent lexicographer and a dedicated promoter of Hindi. The Government of India awarded him the Padma Bhusan in 1974 in recognition of his contribution to Hindi research and language.

Fr. Eugene Lafont of St. Xavier’s College, Kolkata, has the distinction of introducing modern science into India with his knowledge of experimental physics and his ability to popularise science among the people. He was called the Father of Science in India. Scientists Sir J.C. Bose and Dr. CV Raman were influenced by him. Modern Indology owes much to the Belgians, Johans, Dandoy, Antonie and Fallon of St. Xavier’s College, Kolkata. They also enriched the Bengali and Sanskrit languages. Fr. Fallon was called the apostle of inter-faith dialogue in Kolkata. They run more than 30 colleges, 155 high schools and some institutes of business administration spread throughout the country and they are known for reputation.
More than 300,000 students belonging to various socio-economic and linguistic sectors receive their education. Empowering the students with human dignity with spiritual and secular values based on justice and equality is the main thrust of the Jesuit institutions.

**Jesuits in Bengal**

Catholicism in Bengal owed its origin, growth and development in the 16th and 17th centuries to the power, wealth and influence of the numerous Portuguese traders and mercenaries as well as to the zeal of the missionaries. The history of the establishment of Christianity in Bengal is the history of Portuguese Missionary work in Bengal. With religious and political motives, the Portuguese came to Bengal. The sword always allied itself with the Cross and while the one extended the domain of the Empire, the other spread the Christian faith. The first words of Vasco da Gama to a Tunisian Moor were "We have come to seek Christians and spices." The victories of the sword of the Portuguese in Bengal have been erased from the memories, but the missions established by them are still bearing witness to the victories of their Cross. The untiring efforts of Fr. Henri Jossen, S.J. and Fr. Henri Hosten, S.J., revealed many precious missionary documents, but much still remains hidden. Among the various missionary groups, the Jesuits were the first missionaries under the leadership of Francis Xavier to play an important role in establishing Christianity in Bengal from 1542 onwards. The Jesuit Fathers Antonio Vaz and Pedro Dias came to Bengal in 1576 and the work of the Jesuits in Bengal between 1598 and 1600 is described in the letters to Fr. Niculau de Pimenta who was in Goa.

**Jesuits in Hooghly**

Pimenta sent four Jesuits, namely, Francisco Fernandes, Domingo de Souza, Melchior da Fonseca and Andre Boves to Hooghly in 1599. They reached Hooghly and preached in the bigger Church (*summon templo*). They erected a school and a hospital in Hooghly, evidently the first hospital in Bengal. The kings of Chandecan (Jessore), Arakan and Bakla invited them to their kingdoms and with their royal
patronage; they preached Christian religion, constructed churches and residences. But the disputes between the Portuguese and the kings of Arakan, Bakla and Chandecan led to the torture and death of many Portuguese, imprisonment and murder of many Jesuits and sacrileges. Under these melancholy circumstances the surviving Fathers eventually left Bengal, some reached to Pegu (Burma) and some to Cochin.\textsuperscript{59} From the letters of Fr. Fernandes and his three companions, it appears that long before them, the Portuguese Fathers had begun missionary work in Bengal. The Jesuits, then as now, not only converted the people of Bengal but also sent Bengali children to be educated in the great Jesuit College of Santa Fe in Goa, which was later known as the College of Sao Paulo.\textsuperscript{60}

By 1616, there were six Jesuits in various parts of Bengal. One was placed at Sripur and another was in Dacca. The other four were stationed at Hooghly and Pipli. In many of these places, the Jesuits erected churches of their own and when they tried to expand their activities in Hooghly, the Augustinians imposed restrictions on their work. It was at about this time that the Jesuit residence of Hooghly became a modest “College” where children were taught to read, write and speak Latin.\textsuperscript{61} In 1965, there was a severe famine followed by pestilence. Four of the Jesuits belonging to the Hooghly College and two Augustinian fathers died in the service of the plague-stricken. As the century advanced, the Jesuits were often unable to replace their losses, while the Augustinians generally maintained a sufficient number of priests in Bengal.\textsuperscript{62} Under the patronage of the Portuguese Padroado, the Augustinians, the Jesuits and the Dominicans had been catering to the needs of the Portuguese and in the process had also baptized hundreds of natives, including the vast numbers of prisoners and slaves captured by them in the course of frequent wars with the local chieftains. Some of the missionaires, through their spirit of service during the outbreak of plagues, attracted a number of people to the Christian fold.\textsuperscript{63}

When the French started a factory in Chandernagore in 1688, the Augustinians erected their churches there and claimed sole jurisdiction to the chagrin of the French Jesuits. But the French Government intervened and the Jesuit Bishop Francis Laynes of Mylapore created a parish for the French Jesuits.\textsuperscript{64} This
bishop visited Balasore in June 1712 and after a short visit to Calcutta proceeded to Bandel near Chandernagore, where there were Europeans, Eurasians and Indian converts, mostly from the suppressed and exploited castes. The bishop began his nine-month-long formal visitation to the Chittagong, Dacca and many places of the present Bangladesh. Everywhere there were baptisms, confirmations, marriages and other church ceremonies, which had not been seen in Bengal for long. After his tedious travels, Bishop Laynes retired quietly and died due to his critical illness in June 1715 at the Jesuit College of Hooghly. Though his visitation brought new life to the Bengal mission, his death led the things to a standstill. The Jesuits had a residence, a college and a Church at Bandel. The Jesuit Mission ministered in Hooghly till 1940 when Fr. George Deistermann, the last Rector died. Fr. J. Tieffentaller S. J. who wrote a sort of statistical account of Hooghly in 1765 spokethat the Jesuit College was already in ruins.

Vicariate of Calcutta

The 19th century was a period of growth for the Society of Jesus under the able leadership of Fr. Roothan (1785-1853), the third Jesuit General who collaborated on a world level with Pope Gregory XVI and the SCPF (Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide) for the restoration of the missions. As the plea from Calcutta had been for English speaking priests, the new Vicariate of Bengal was entrusted to the Jesuit Province of England, with Fr. Robert St. Leger, the Vice- Provincial of Ireland, as the leader of the new mission. The Jesuit General wanted to make Calcutta for British India what Goa had been for Portuguese India. The immediate scope of the SCPF in sending the Jesuit missionary expedition under Robert St. Leger to the newly established Vicariate of Calcutta was to put an end to the existing scandalous factions and to serve more adequately the numerous Catholics who appealed to the SCPF.

The Archdiocese of Calcutta

The Archdiocese of Calcutta covers the greater part of West Bengal. The first Christian settlements in Bengal appeared at the end of the sixteenth century
around the Church of Bandel, on the banks of the river Hooghly. The Vicariate Apostolic of Bengal, with Calcutta as its headquarters was established in 1834 and was entrusted to the English Province of the Society of Jesus at its inception. However, at the end of 1838, it passed into the hands of the Diocesan Clergy. Twenty-six years later, in 1864, the Belgian Jesuits who had arrived at the end of November in 1859, under the leadership of Fr. Depelchin took charge of this ecclesiastical unit. The first dismemberment of the extensive Vicariate Apostolic of Bengal took place in 1845, with the erection of the Vicariate of Calcutta and the Vicariate of Chittagong, renamed in 1850 as the Vicariate of West Bengal and Vicariate Apostolic of East Bengal. In 1886, with the establishment of the hierarchy in India, the Vicariate Apostolic became the Archdiocese of Calcutta and His Grace Mgr. Paul Goethals S.J., its first Archbishop. Prior to the appointment of Mgr. Goethals as the first Archbishop of Calcutta, apostolate in Midnapore and Balasore districts was launched in 1865, in the 24 Parganas in 1868, and in Chaibasa Region of Chota Nagpur in 1869. The latter mission field developed so fast that from 1870 the greater part of the missionary activities was absorbed by it, until it was erected into the independent Diocese of Ranchi in 1927.

After ruling for 25 years over the apostolic field entrusted to his zeal, Archbishop Goethals died on July 4, 1901. Till the appointment of his successor, Mgr. Brice Meuleman S.J., the Archdiocese was ruled by Rev. Fr. Marchal S.J, Vicar Capitular. His Grace, Mgr. Meuleman was ordained and installed on May 25, 1902. In 1912, he opened an Apostolic School in Ranchi and the following year the Diocesan Seminary, first at Bankuli, later transferred to Ranchi in 1916. His Grace, Mgr. Meuleman died on July 15, 1924. On August 10, 1921, His Grace Mgr. Ferdinand Perier S.J., had been ordained Coadjutor with the right of succession to the Archbishop of Calcutta. When he took over in 1924, the Archdiocese comprised of the Ecclesiastical units, Archdiocese of Ranchi, Dioceses of Raigarh-Ambikapur, Jamshedpur, Darjeeling, Dumka, Daltonganj and the prefecture Apostolic of Balasore. The division of the Archdiocese began in 1927, when by a Decree of the Holy See, dated February 28, 1927 the various districts of the Ranchi
Mission were detached from the Archdiocese of Calcutta and erected into a separate diocese, which in 1953 became the Metropolitan See of Ranchi.

**Missionary Developments of Calcutta Archdiocese**

Under the leadership of Archbishop Perier S.J., new missionary developments were launched in the 24 Parganas, Midnapore District, Terai, Darjeeling District and especially in the Santal Parganas, so that the number of Catholics nearly trebled since the division of the Archdiocese. In August 1960, Archbishop Perier resigned at the age of 85 years, and handed over the direction of the Archdiocese to His Grace, Archbishop Vivian Dyer of the Bombay diocesan Clergy, who had been ordained by him as his Coadjutor one year earlier. The term of office of Archbishop Dyer lasted only for 18 months. He died on 8th February 1962. He had to prepare and realize the second division of the Archdiocese, which resulted in the erection of three new dioceses: Jamshedpur (including a portion of the Archdiocese of Ranchi), Darjeeling (including the former Prefecture Apostolic of Sikkim), and Dumka (including the former Prefecture Apostolic of Malda).  

Following Archbishop Dyer, Rt. Rev. Mgr. H. Eric Barber, Vicar Capitular, administered the Archdiocese till the installation of His Grace, Mgr. Albert V. D’Souza, as the Archbishop of Calcutta on December 10, 1962. He remained for nearly seven years in Calcutta. But during his tenure of office, he established two important institutions in the Archdiocese: Morning Star College and Boy’s Town. Morning Star College, the Seminary of Calcutta has now developed into the Regional Seminary of Bengal. In November 1968, three districts of Odisha, i.e. Balasore, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj, which were under the Archdiocese of Kolkata, were erected into the Prefecture Apostolic of Balasore and entrusted to the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) of the Province of Madrid.

Archbishop Albert V. D’Souza resigned due to ill-health in 1969. His Grace Archbishop Lawrence Trevor Picachy SJ, took up the responsibility of the Archdiocese on transfer from Jamshedpur to Calcutta. On May 24, 1976, His Holiness Pope Paul VI, in Rome appointed Archbishop Picachy as a Cardinal. The
Diocese of Baruipur was erected on 18th August 1977 from the Archdiocese of Calcutta. Its territory comprises of the southern and central part of the 24 Parganas, (Presently South 24 Parganas district). On 13th April 1985, Most Rev. Archbishop Henry D’ Souza of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar was nominated as the Coadjutor to His Eminence Lawrence Cardinal Picachy S.J. and when His Eminence, Cardinal Picachy S.J. resigned due to ill health, Archbishop Henry D’ Souza took charge of the Archdiocese on 1st May 1986.

In Bengal, there are two Jesuit Provinces: Calcutta (Kolkata) and Darjeeling with about 350 Jesuits spread all over the State. Dumka – Raiganj Province partially extends into Raiganj area of West Bengal. Jesuits are involved in educational work, pastoral ministry, tribal and dalit welfare programmes, social research and action, social communication and medical and health care. They are responsible, to a large extent, for the educational and socio-economic advancement of tribals in the Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas areas.

In imitation of Christ, and in the footsteps of its founder, St. Ignatius and his missionary companions like Francis Xavier, the Society of Jesus has made a preferential option for the poor in all their mission activities. They accompany and empower the oppressed, suppressed and marginalized at every level and in every aspect in their life situations from the womb to the tomb. The Bengal Mission of the Belgian Jesuits was in need of Jesuit missionaries to collaborate with them in taking care of the Santals who formed a majority in Bengal and Bihar in the north eastern part of India. The socio-economic, cultural, political, educational situations of these Santals became the targets of change for the Maltese/Sicilian Jesuits.

Endnotes
The six companions of Ignatius of Loyola were: Nicolas Bobadilla (1507 – 1590), Pierre Favre (1506 – 1546), Diego Lainez (1512 – 1565), Simao Rodrigues (1510 - 1579), Alfonso Salmeron (1515 – 1585) and Francis Xavier (1506 – 1552).


The three more companions of Ignatius of Loyola were: Paschase Broet (1500 – 1562), Jean Codure (1508 – 1541) and Claude Jay (1504 – 1552).


Ibid., p. 271.


Ibid., pp. 277-279.

Ibid., p. 800.


Peter Canisius (1521-1608) and Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) were the Jesuits who wrote catechism for promotion and formation of Christian life.

John W. Padberg SJ, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, p.21

Chinese Rites Controversy, a 17th–18th-century Chinese originated argument among Roman Catholic missionaries about whether the ceremonies honouring family ancestors like Confucius were so tainted with superstition as to be incompatible with Christian belief. The Jesuits believed that they probably were not and that they could be tolerated within certain limits; the Dominicans and Franciscans took the opposite view and carried the issue to Rome. In 1645, the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith on the basis of a brief submitted by the Dominicans condemned the rites. After considering the arguments of the Jesuits, however, the same congregation lifted the ban in 1656. By the end of the 17th century, many Dominicans and Franciscans had come to share the Jesuits’ opinion, but Rome disagreed. In a decree of 1704, reinforced by a bull in 1715, Pope Clement XI banned the rites and Pope Benedict XIV reaffirmed the prohibition and forbade further debate. A decree of December 8, 1939, authorized Christians to take part in ceremonies honouring Confucius and to observe the ancestral rites. The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) proclaimed the principle of admitting native ceremonies into the liturgy of the church whenever possible.

The theological principles of Cornelis Jansen, a 17th century Dutch religious reformer, which emphasize predestination, deny free will, and maintain that human nature is incapable of good.

John W. Padberg SJ, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, p.22


1995 is the year of the 34th General Congregation

The most eminent Jesuit scholars were Pierre Teilhard de Chardin of France in Paleontology and Spirituality; Karl Rahner of Germany, John Courtney Murray of the United States, and Bernard Lonergan of Canada in Systematic Theology; Henri de Lubac of France in Patristics; and Walter Ong of the United States in Cultural Studies.


31 V.A. Lapomarda, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 793
33 V.A. Lapomarda, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, pp. 794 - 795
34 Ibid, p. 795
35 John W. Padberg SJ, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, p. 23
36 Ibid.
39 Ibid., p. 247.
40 Ibid., p. 218
41 Ibid., p. 219.
43 The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier (LSFX) trans. M. J. Costelloe, 47.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Fr. Henri Josson S.J. (1869 – 1939) was himself a missionary in Bengal, India for 23 years from 1889 to 1912. In 1912, he returned to Belgium due to ill health. He spent most of his leisure time for writing about the mission’s history. He published History of Bengal Mission in French in 1921.
56 Fr. Henri Hosten, S.J. (1873 – 1935) was a missionary in India. He is the author of many booklets and articles on the early history of the Catholic missions in India, Nepal and Tibet. He spent 29 years in the Archdiocese of Calcutta. Due to ill health, he left for his homeland, Belgium and died at the age of 62.
59 Ibid., p. 28
60 Ibid.
62 Ibid., pp.72, 80-81,96.
65 Ibid., p. 109.
66 Ibid., p. 108


